

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01

OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-01 /098 W

----- 127320

R 211021Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2723

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0645

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, BTIO, EMIN, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN REQUEST FOR MINERAL AND PETROLEUM EXPLORATION BY
U.S. FIRMS

REF: STATE 025459 (NOTAL); B. STATE 010481 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN PETROLEUM AND MINERALS MINISTRY RECEIVING
BUSY ROUND OF VISITORS FROM AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES
TWO SO FAR), JAPANESE, FRENCH AND ITALIANS. THIS
MESSAGE PROVIDES RESPONSES TO INQUIRIES OF THREE AMERICAN
COMPANIES (REFTELS) AND REQUESTS FIRMS TO SEND REPS TO
SYRIA AS THIS IS ONLY WAY TO EVALUATE WHAT WE BELIEVE ARE
GOOD OPPORTUNITIES. PETROLEUM MINISTRY HAS BEEN VERY
COOPERATIVE IN PROVIDING RECENT AND GOOD DATA TO COMPANIES
WHICH HAVE VISITED MINISTRY AND HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERN-
MENT CONTINUE TO EXPRESS STRONG INTEREST IN INVOLVEMENT OF
AMERICAN COMPANIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF SYRIAN PETROLEUM AND
MINERAL SECTORS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MEETING FEB 19 WITH SYRIAN DEPUTY MINISTER FOR
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PETROLEUM AND MINERAL RESOURCES DR. BURHAM ATA'EI

(A-TAH-YEE, ACCENT ON MIDDLE SYLLABLE; SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH),
ECONOFF INFORMALLY REVIEWED PROPOSED A.I. D. TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE IN MINERALS/GEOLOGY SECTOR (EXCLUDING PETROLEUM
STATE 032892). ATA'EI MOST ENTHUSIASTIC AND PROMISED
IMMEDIATE POSITIVE RESPONSE JUST AS SOON AS FOREIGN MINISTRY
TRANSFERRED ACTION ON OUR OFFICIAL NOTE TO HIS MINISTRY.

3. ECONOFF THEN REVIEWED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PETROLEUM/
MINERAL DEVELOPMENT IN SYRIA, NOTING OUR EFFORTS TO EN-
COURAGE INTEREST OF AMERICAN FIRMS IN SYRIA (BASED ON REFTELS
AND SUBSEQUENT LETTERS FROM AMBASSADOR TO PETROLEUM MINISTER
DR. ADNAN MUSTAFA:

4. H.K. FERGUSON COMPANY (REF A):

A. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT INFORMING JOHN A.
MONTGOMERY OF FIRM THAT ATA'EI IS MOST INTERESTED IN
MEETING FIRM'S REPRESENTATIVES. HE APOLOGIZES HE CANNOT BE
MORE SPECIFIC ON NEEDS BUT WILL ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION
REQUESTED BY COMPANY. IN OUR OPINION, INTENT IS FIRM AND
SYRIANS WILL GIVE SERIOUS COMMUNICATIONS TO OFFERS BY
AMERICAN FIRM. HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING PRESI-
DENT ASAD (DAMASCUS 265), HAVE MADE THIS CLEAR. ATA'EI PLANS
TO BE IN LONDON WEEK OF FEB 24.

B. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPT OR PARIS CABLE US NAME AND
ADDRESS OF FERGUSON PARIS REP SO WE CAN ENCOURAGE ATA'EI
OR REP TO MEET IN PARIS OR LONDON. PRESUMABLY SYRIAN
EMBASSY LONDON WILL KNOW WHEREABOUTS OF ATA'EI WE WILL
ALSO ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN HIS ITINERARY AND CABLE TO PARIS
AND LONDON.

C. WHETHER OR NOT CONNECTION WITH ATA'EI CAN BE MADE,
WE BELIEVE IT WELL WORTH FERGUSON'S WHILE TO SEND REP DOWN
FROM PARIS TO SURVEY RAPIDLY GROWING SYRIAN MARKET, WHICH
SUPPORTED WITH SIZEABLE INPUTS OF ARAB OIL FUNDS. WIDE
RANGE OF H.K. FERGUSON ACTIVITIES IN ADDITION TO MINERALS,
INCLUDES, AUTO ASSEMBLY PLANT, PETROCHEMICAL PLANTS,
INCLUDING UREA PRODUCTION, SUGAR BEET PLANTS, IRON AND STEEL,
TIRE PLANT ETC.

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5. LONE STAR GAS (REF B):

COMMERCE REQUESTED ENCOURAGE LONE STAR GAS
REP TO SCHEDULE STOP IN SYRIA. TWO AMERICAN OIL FIRMS HAVE
ALREADY COMMENTED TO US REGARDING STRONG SYRIAN INTEREST IN
HAVING AMERICAN FIRMS WORK IN SYRIA AND THIS INTEREST
SUBSTANTIATED BY VERY OPEN AND COOPERATIVE POLICY ON PART OF

PETROLEUM MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN SUPPLYING RECENT AND GOOD
GEOLOGICAL/SEISMIC DATA TO COMPANIES VISITING MINISTRY.

6. TREND CORPORATION (REF B):

COMMERCE SHOULD ENCOURAGE TREND CORPORATION REPS TO
VISIT SYRIA AND MEET WITH MINPET OFFICIALS. MOST OF
SYRIA WEST OF 38E DEGREES OPEN FOR BIDDING, INCLUDING OFF-
SHORE SOUTH OF ABOUT 36N TO NEAR LEBANESE BORDER AND OUT TO
MEDIAN LINE BETWEEN SYRIA AN CYPRUS. PRODUCTION SHARING
AGREEMENTS BASED ON EGYPTIAN MODELS,
PARTICULARLY RECENT UNION OIL AGREEMENT IN EGYPT, ARE DESIRED
BY SYRIANS (WHO HAVE RECENTLY CONSULTED CLOSELY WITH
EGYPTIAN OIL OFFICIALS).

7. L.O. WARD LETTER (0-4- 1, REF B): NOT RECEIVED.
PLEASE POUCH ANOTHER COPY, ATTENTION R.M. WRIGHT.

8. EMBASSY POUCHING "MAP OF OPEN AREAS". DATED JANUARY 22,
1975 TO NEA/ARN.
PELLETREAU

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